

## SHOTGUN WEDDING: INTERAGENCY TRANSFORMATION FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**SHOTGUN WEDDING: INTERAGENCY TRANSFORMATION FOR THE 21ST  
CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The first eight years of the 21st Century are replete with examples of a rapidly changing and dynamic global security environment in which the United States must operate. Equally present are the numerous statements and studies by governmental bodies, military leadership, non-partisan think tanks, academia and political elites who believe the current National Security and Interagency apparatus is incapable of responding effectively to such an environment. The planning and execution of the invasion of Iraq, more specifically post hostility operations or phase IV, and events leading up to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are arguably the most telling examples of how ineffective and outdated the current national security apparatus is with respect to the 'new' and enduring challenges of the 21st Century. In response to such dramatic environmental change, the current national security apparatus, not only the Department of Defense (DOD), must transform itself into a multi-dimensional interagency system capable of achieving unity of effort across all elements of national power.



## SHOTGUN WEDDING: INTERAGENCY TRANSFORMATION FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

... these new threats also require our government to operate as a whole differently – to act with unity, agility, and creativity.

—Robert Gates<sup>1</sup>

### The Need for Change

The first eight years of the 21st Century are replete with examples of a rapidly changing and dynamic global security environment in which the United States must operate. Equally present are the numerous statements and studies by governmental bodies, military leadership, non-partisan think tanks, academia and political elites who believe the current National Security and Interagency apparatus is incapable of responding effectively to such an environment. The planning and execution of the invasion of Iraq, more specifically post hostility operations or phase IV, and events leading up to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are arguably the most telling examples of how ineffective and outdated the current national security apparatus is with respect to the 'new' and enduring challenges of the 21st Century. In response to such dramatic environmental change, the current national security apparatus, not only the Department of Defense (DOD), must transform itself into a multi-dimensional interagency system capable of achieving unity of effort across all elements of national power. To focus an admittedly broad topic, this essay will discuss the new global environment, the critical need for unity of effort across the United States Government (USG) and a recommended path for the development of a comprehensive national security policy, National Security Council (NSC) reform, common USG regional alignment, cultural change and strategic leadership.



## 21st Century Environment

Recently, the common argument to support the need for interagency reform centers on 'realized' interagency failures that led to the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 (9/11) and the failure of post conflict operations following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. However, much like the delayed realization of a changing global environment following the end of the cold war, numerous events throughout the past fifteen years signaled a real and enduring change to the national security environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A few such changes include the US intervention in Somalia, Kosovo and Haiti, the US embassies bombings in 1998, and the USS Cole bombing in 2000; all of which included either failed or failing states or non-state actors. Couple these events with the hyper change associated with a truly global marketplace, the emergence of China, Russia and the European Union (EU) and the US response to the 9/11 attacks and you have a new, extremely complex, volatile enduring environment; not small changes within an old one.

With such a dynamic 'new' and continuously changing environment, is the current National Security process (largely set forth in the 1947 National Security Act) capable of anticipating emerging threats, generating effective policy, and implementing policy in the adaptive and dynamic fashion required of it? I argue that it is not and to attain a system capable of doing so requires dramatic action at the senior levels of our government. Specifically, the President and Congress must view the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as a new environment that demands a national security decision making process that is agile, adaptive, inclusive and responsive; something not readily conducive using the current process or indicative to our form of government. Such change can occur incrementally, but it must occur and it must include the development and passage of executive and

statutory directives that force a new form of government capable of horizontal decision making and execution, not a cumbersome vertical one. Admittedly, numerous studies and opinions by national security experts warn against pursuing such drastic changes either because they do not see the current environment as a true departure from the past or because such change is not possible due to partisan polarization or bureaucratic remonstrance. However, I argue that such change within the USG is critical in order to remain a relevant and dominant global force not only twenty-five years from now, but ninety-two years from now.

Much like the landmark DOD reform put into motion by the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, the process will require strong national leadership, the willingness to invest political capital over many years, and incremental but continuous change. To counter a possible impression that effecting such change will be easy, one only needs to look at DOD's twenty-two year struggle with implementing the tenants of the Goldwater-Nichols Act; a process that is by no means complete and is itself struggling to adapt to the new environment. The interagency change discussed here is a long term twenty to thirty year process, if not longer, that must follow basic tenants of organizational change, strive to attain unity of purpose, and continue to respond to emerging and projected changes within the global environment.

### Unity of Effort

Achieving unity of effort across all elements of the government is the responsibility of the President and is generally executed through the NSC with procedures and mandates set forth in the National Security Act of 1947 and numerous executive orders and presidential directives tailored by successive administrations. National Security

Presidential Directive 1 (NSPD 1) signed on February 13, 2001 is the most recent of the NSC models and divides responsibilities between the NSC Principles Committee (NSC/PC), Deputies Committee (NSC/DC), six Regional Policy Coordination Committees and eleven (now twenty-two based on the publishing of subsequent NSPDs) Functional Policy Coordination Committees (NSC/PCCs)<sup>2</sup>. Add two special interagency groups to address operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, various sub-PCCs, the National Economic Council (NEC), the Assistant to the President for Economic Affairs, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security, fifteen Executive Departments and one hundred and thirty-five Federal Agencies<sup>3</sup> and the attainment of a unified, seamless, horizontal interagency process may seem unattainable. It may be, but continuing with the structure outlined above is impractical, inefficient and irresponsible.

Given the gravity of the situation and apparent urgency of reform, one might assume that significant government resources have been applied to the problem and that there is consensus on a path forward. Unfortunately, that is not the case and a telling example of how out of synch thinking is in regards to developing an appropriate enduring National Security apparatus' is evident through a cursory look into Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD 56) enacted in May 1997 during the Clinton Administration. Titled 'Managing Complex Contingency Operations'<sup>4</sup>, PDD 56 was published 'as a handy reference for interagency planning of future complex contingency operations'<sup>5</sup> and while it attempted to provide interagency unity of purpose and placed requirements on departments and agencies, it was not codified in law, not properly resourced, not

uniformly enforced and has since been rescinded and turned into an interagency handbook<sup>6</sup>.

The Bush administrations efforts in structuring the national security and interagency apparatus include fifty-four NSPDs and twenty-three Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD)<sup>7</sup> leading to the expansion of NSC/PCCs originally set forth in NSPD 1. Of note, NSPD 44 (Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization)<sup>8</sup> dated 7 December 2005 sets forth processes, many of them focused on interagency coordination, to stabilize and reconstruct countries or regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, NSPD 44 formally acknowledged the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS) in the State Department created by Secretary Powell in August of 2004. While generally viewed as a step in the right direction, closer scrutiny shows that these measures often conflict, they remain executive mandates with little budgetary or statutory support from Congress and the roughly eighty member staff of the S/CRS is hard pressed keep pace with eight of the most pressing countries.

The inability of such efforts to adequately address the interagency shortfalls of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century environment is rooted in one key area; they are based on a faulty premise. All of the efforts discussed above, and many of the emerging recommendations, view the complex contingency operations and the interagency processes necessary to conduct national security policy as isolated semi-independent and ad-hoc events that occur sporadically throughout the execution of national security policy. This approach misinterprets the new global environment and views these activities as isolated events in the execution of broader policy instead of viewing these activities as the steady state

environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The new enduring global environment is one of crisis management, continuous change, and the intermingling of all the elements of national power regardless of region or mission. Such an environment mandates an interagency structure capable of creating and executing a unified national security strategy that is appropriately resourced, capable of rapid and dynamic change, evolves into a truly collaborative interagency process, and remains intact regardless of which administration is in office.

### Achieving Unity of Effort

All too often, organizations believe that making minor changes to the current structure to address a changing environment is appropriate and fitting and this approach is very prevalent today. However, what usually results is akin to rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic; futile change that does not address the real problem. A recent and widely published example of national security policy failures is the ineffective and adversarial relationship between the Department of State (DOS) and DOD in planning for and conducting Phase IV operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>10</sup> Admittedly, pursuing interagency reform to attain a greater level of unity of effort and interagency cooperation is difficult, arduous and only marginally effective in the best of circumstances. The changes that have been attempted over the last ten years have been anything but the best of circumstances but one must question why they were not more effective. I argue that failures such as these only occur when an organization lacks true strategic guidance that prioritizes tasks and resources, lacks unity of effort and does not possess agile and adaptive horizontal as well as vertical decision making, planning and executing capabilities. To some, transforming the USG in order to achieve these ends is

impossible; to others it is unnecessary and is akin to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. However, for the USG to achieve true unity of effort required of it in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, I posit that transformation, not reform, is not only possible; but required.

One of the most prominent arguments for reform is noted in CSIS's Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase 2 Report, when it highlights that "Title 10 of the U.S. Code gives the Secretary of Defense the 'authority, direction and control' over the Department subject to the direction of the President...Congress has not given the President the same authority over the USG agencies".<sup>11</sup> The result is interagency processes that lack unity of effort, or command<sup>12</sup>, and an inability to bring all the elements of national power together not only through policy, but in execution as well. Interestingly, this same argument also brings into question whether a Goldwater-Nichols like initiative, which was focused on one Department, is an appropriate solution or whether we are really in need of agency wide reform such as a 'Beyond National Security Act of 1947.' I argue that what is needed is broad, interagency reform that redefines the USG commensurate with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. While the elements of such a transformation are extremely complex and can fill volumes of literature, only five recommendations are set forth below. The first two include developing true comprehensive national strategy and NSC reform, both of which will be discussed in detail as they are the foundation for effective national security strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The final three include USG regional alignment, cultural change and strategic leadership and while they will only be briefly described, they are critical enablers to any reform process.

## Comprehensive National Strategy

The current United States strategy is set forth in the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS); an unclassified document largely focused on reviewing progress made towards attaining the goals set forth in the 2002 National Security Strategy; which itself is less about strategy and more a position or goals setting document. The ensuing department strategy documents are largely unclassified department centric 'strategies' that provide little if any specificity, do not set forth clear priorities for departmental funding, or priority of effort. Additionally, if compared horizontally, many department strategies do not acknowledge or address their role in supporting other agencies in pursuing policy ends or leading the interagency process if designated as the lead. Ironically, many argue that this approach is not only effective but is vital in order to provide flexibility in allocating resources, developing and standing down ad-hoc planning groups, and conducting interagency coordination. In practice however, it further supports the propensity for departmental isolation, vertical information flow, interagency coordination by the willing, and the protection of departmental resources.

When viewed critically, the documents described above do not provide the strategic guidance, vision and discipline required to enable the USG to function as a 'whole-government' that is mutually supporting, collaborative, predictive and agile. Interestingly, the American Heritage Dictionary defines strategy as "the science and art of using all the forces of a nation to execute approved plans as effectively as possible during peace or war."<sup>13</sup> The key phrases here are 'all the forces of a nation' and 'to execute approved plans' and while recent NSS's have a degree of buy in throughout the government, that buy in is achieved through vagueness and agreement on the lowest common denominator thus diluting the effectiveness of the document. Following this

path, it is not hard to grasp why the USG seemingly operates on divergent and counterproductive paths. In an environment where interagency coordination and unity of effort is critical, the only way to achieve such an end state is at the beginning; a clear, concise and agreed upon National Security Strategy and the alignment of that strategy with resources.

In order to achieve such an end state, the development of the NSS must be revised and centered on “bringing together interagency tools...and provide central direction and clear lines of authority that do not allow one agency to bypass another or to stonewall or partially comply... with another but stresses and mandates working as part of a common effort.”<sup>14</sup> It is recognized however, that such an approach requires a level of cooperation between the executive and legislative branches as well as between political parties that does not currently exist; and as some would argue, can and even should not exist. However, it is argued here that comprehensive NSS’s are vital to interagency reform and as well as the attainment of true interagency power necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and can be attained by adopting the following processes:

1. Mandate through statute that National Security Strategies explicitly state near and long term national policy objectives and priorities; the assignment of lead, supporting and supported agencies and responsibilities; recommend resource allocation; and identify areas of risk as well as areas of potential interest.<sup>15</sup>

Such a document would be developed by the NSC (with significant presidential involvement) and would require extensive congressional staffing, bargaining and hard choices over where to focus the nations power vice broad vague guidance that dilutes the nations power. Most assuredly, such a strategy would



need to be classified to ensure that the hard and often politically sensitive choices made in order to pursue a whole-of-government approach are not lessened by rancor and political motives. In order to ensure the strategy is adequately communicated to the populace, an unclassified NSS (similar to those published today) should be produced.

2. Mandate through statute that all subsequent agency and department strategies acknowledge and address their role in supporting other lead agencies in pursuing national policy ends or in leading the interagency process if designated as such.
3. Modify legislation to only require the publishing of comprehensive strategies during the first and third year of a president's tenure and ensure they are adequately staffed before being presented.<sup>16</sup> While many argue that the policy resulting from such an approach is inflexible, it is argued here that this process ensures whole-of-government buy in at the beginning of the policy process and will lead to flexibility in funding, support and execution.

CSIS's *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* Phase 1 Report emphasizes this point by stating that the current national security process "...lacks government-wide procedures for developing integrated strategies and plans" and while the report's findings focus on strategy formulation and planning at the department or agency level, the logic is equally appropriate for the development of national strategy.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, CSIS's Phase 2 Report even goes as far as recommending that the NSC "develop classified contingency planning guidance and conduct Quadrennial National Security Reviews (QNSR) of the NSS."<sup>18</sup> While not going as far as to recommend a classified NSS,

CSIS's recommendations recognize the vitality of meaningful and comprehensive strategic direction and its importance in forming the foundation of any organization's start point for policy planning and execution. However, the report does fall short in solely focusing on the contingency planning process and again demonstrates that many of the best minds studying this problem do not recognize the shift in steady state operations reminiscent of continuous 'global contingency planning' vice predictable steady state operations highlighted by moments of change. If the above environment is recognized, the same logic that was used to make the case for classified contingency guidance is applicable to the document that all contingency plans spawn from; a classified, long-term, NSS that encompasses the entire government. Admittedly, many supporting and dissenting opinions exist with such an approach but it is argued here that without clear, definitive, long term, classified, strategic guidance in the form of the NSS, interagency cooperation will remain only marginally effective, if not outright ineffective.

## NSC Reform

Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Peter Pace observed that the current national security system "does a great job of teeing up the issues of the day for the President...but once the President decides to do something, then our government goes back into stovepipes for execution."<sup>19</sup> Anthony Cordesman reinforces this argument in positing that "the interagency process must have a clear and unambiguous line of authority from the National Security council downward..."<sup>20</sup> These are very disturbing and telling statements that are unfortunately echoed throughout the vast majority of think tank reports and statements made by senior USG officials over the last decade. Unfortunately these statements and reports have not led to a single

Executive or Congressional committee on interagency reform and while most recognize the problem, the willingness to commit political capital to solve the problem is non-existent. Even the Interagency Reform Act of 2007 (H.R. 2143) that would require “the Secretary of Defense to enter into an agreement with the Center for the Study of the Presidency to study reforms of the national security interagency system” introduced on 3 May, 2007 has gained no traction.<sup>21</sup>

In stark contrast to the limited governmental interest on the topic, studies on interagency reform by prominent academics and practitioners over the last five or more years argue that a new national security architecture is way overdue. One such study argues for a new national security architecture that will incorporate the roles and functions of new organizations and processes that reside in the interagency space between the President and individual departments and agencies.”<sup>22</sup> As previously mentioned, the *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* Phase 2 Reports recommends changes that mandate the issuance of comprehensive contingency planning guidance, quadrennial NSS review and even semi-annual “over the Horizon” reviews.<sup>23</sup> Recently, the former Central Command Commander, GEN Anthony Zinni recommended that legislation be passed that imposes on the executive branch a new organization between the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and the Departments that would make recommendations to the NSC.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, such an approach still misses the desired end state; comprehensive interagency planning and execution. However, if one were to expand on GEN Zinni’s argument and incorporate within such an organization extensive strategic and operational planning capabilities as well as the ability to facilitate interagency coordination, funding and execution the result may very well be the catalyst

for interagency whole-of-government cooperation. It is important to note here that giving the NSC Staff more operational authority may be reminiscent of the early to mid 1980's and the resulting Iran-Contra affair. However, with appropriate executive and even legislative oversight, the effect may be more transparency and responsiveness in policy planning, resourcing and execution, not less.

It is readily apparent that central to these discussions is determining what role the NSC Staff should, or could, play in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century environment. Under the current model, the NSC Staff remains a malleable institution that exists to advise and assist the President and is regularly redesigned to meet the needs and leadership style of the current administration. Since its creation following the National Security Act of 1947, the NSC Staff model has generally fallen into two broad categories: the Presidential model with National Security direction, vision, and execution centered on the President and a small cadre of trusted advisors, and the Secretarial model where these powers were largely resident in powerful cabinet members.<sup>25</sup> While very effective during the somewhat static Cold War environment of past decades, it is now being argued that the later model "allows too much Presidential freedom and undermines the continuity necessary to develop and implement policy in a dynamic ever changing environment, impedes the development of a strong consensus and undervalues the role of the NSC."<sup>26</sup> Given these shortfalls and in view of the current and future global environment, horizontal and vertical integration of effort among departments and agencies is perhaps the President's most significant (and potentially unattainable) challenge. Conversely, any reform of the NSC Staff must address vital issues such as ensuring legitimacy of

decision making below the President; seamless and effective interagency planning and coordination; and developing interagency expertise throughout the system.”<sup>27</sup>

Assuming that one agrees with the above argument stating that the most logical place for interagency reform is in the NSC Staff and that its current structure is not adequate, finding consensus among the same sampling of studies and practitioners as to what the change should be is challenging.<sup>28</sup> In that light, the following recommendation only briefly sets forth a possible path forward and differs from other models in two distinct areas: 1) the new global environment differs so vastly from past decades that true organizational change is the only reasonable alternative and 2) interagency unity of effort can only be achieved through centralized strategic planning and empowered, decentralized execution. The recommendations are:

1. The NSC Staff returns to its intended advisory and assistance role and assumes the task of developing a classified and long range NSS that encompasses the entire government at the beginning of each administration and conducts periodic reviews of policy objectives.
2. Create an office under the NSC Staff (possibly an Office of Policy Implementation) comprised of interagency members (possibly current PCC members) that translates the NSS into regional and functional plans to achieve the NSS objectives and then oversees their execution. This organization must be empowered to coordinate and when approved, direct interagency efforts and budgeting priorities across the interagency spectrum. Special care must be taken in developing this office to ensure that the legitimacy of Presidential

decision making is maintained but is also balanced through Congressional oversight, buy-in, support and funding.

This approach is broadly supported by arguments made in the *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* Phase 2 Report where it argues that the NSC Staff must be expanded in order to develop interagency strategies and plans and that "...only the NSC can play the role of the honest broker in coordinating the planning and oversight of interagency operations at the strategic level."<sup>29</sup> However, while the report does not recommend the above changes, especially the statutory ones, it does argue that interagency unity of effort could be attained through centralized planning,<sup>30</sup> and that the NSC Staff must transform from a more traditional role of preparing decisions for the President to a more active role of ensuring that Presidential intent is realized through USG actions. It even goes so far as to recommend combining the Homeland Security Council (HSC) with the NSC in order to truly integrate all national security matters.<sup>31</sup>

If coupled with the enhanced planning and operational staffs recommended in the preceding paragraphs, the NSC staff emerges as an organization capable of strategic thinking and planning on one hand and operational planning, crisis management, interagency coordination and oversight on the other. Ideally, the re-organization described above necessitates limited growth (mainly centered in developing a policy implementation capability); relying instead on realigning roles and responsibilities, removing duplicative positions, and combining or linking related security offices in the current NSC and HSC. To prevent the NSC staff from growing beyond that which can be reasonably managed and administered by the President and his advisors, any reform must ensure adequate span of control over its activities as well as maintain the

authority of the EOP. Interestingly, another CSIS report published in 2007 takes a somewhat less direct approach by creating a 'Smart Power' deputy who is dual hatted to the national security advisor and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and is charged with developing and managing planning policies and allocating resources.<sup>32</sup> While entirely feasible, the 'Smart Power' approach emphasizes the challenges of overcoming domestic politics and constituencies, settles for the renewal of existing mandates that have proven themselves ineffective, relies on choosing more effective leaders and holding them accountable, and having Congress act more responsibly. Short of sounding quip, isn't this what has been occurring over the last ten to fifteen years; executive, legislative and agency declarations of increased cooperation, the creation of offices outside the EOP such as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) with yet to be proven effectiveness. What is truly needed is something akin to National Security Act of 1947 or the Homeland Security Act of 2002, not agency specific or small incremental adjustments since "...it is unlikely that reforms modeled after the Goldwater-Nichols Act alone would be sufficient to correct our national security interagency problems."<sup>33</sup>

#### USG Regional Alignment

The National Security Act of 1947 formally established regional commands under the Unified Command Plan and throughout the years regions have been recast, Commands have been added and authorities have increased. The Goldwater-Nichols Act greatly enhanced regional commands authority and prominence by making them the center of gravity for deliberate and contingency planning throughout DOD and gave Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) far reaching authorities to pursue national policy

objectives set forth in the National Defense and Military Strategies.<sup>34</sup> The resultant effect of these evolutions are COCOMs that possess significant authority and resources and are able to synchronize complex and enduring actions within DOD, and to a lesser degree with the other elements of national power, and across their region in order to achieve assigned objectives. In stark contrast to DOD, other agencies and departments within the USG are either aligned with the six regional PCCs that do not mirror those of the DOD, or have separate department, agency or functional alignments that have no set geographical boundary. Without stating the obvious, pursuing interagency solutions to global security strategies, if one existed, is extremely difficult in the best of circumstances and is all but impossible if the USG does not view the globe the same way. Thus, a key element to achieving interagency unity of effort is the creation of a global regional template applicable to the entire USG as well as the alignment of desk offices within each agency or department.<sup>35</sup> While such a change will require government wide agreement only reached through long and heated debate, the result is agencies and departments with common visions, expertise and eventually, interdependent and trusting desk officers.

Once the global template is established, interagency unity of effort would be further enhanced by appointing and co-locating regional USG ‘ambassadors’ with an appropriate staff who are equal in stature, influence and responsibility to regional Combatant Commanders. These ambassadors would assume similar command and integration functions for all USG activities within the region and would be responsible for regional interagency policy development, planning and execution. To address the issue of who is in charge, the lead for achieving national policy objectives within the region



would mirror that set forth in the NSS and result in a supported or supporting relationship between DOD and all other USG agencies. Admittedly, this approach increases the size and authority of agencies and departments and places an additional layer between country ambassadors, DCs, PCs and the President; but it also empowers field organizations, prioritizes USG regional interagency coordination, and enhances regional operational capabilities and unity of effort.<sup>36</sup>

### Cultural Change

Few, if any, of the changes mentioned above are possible without significant cultural change within the USG interagency. This recommendation is not made lightly and will assuredly dwarf the cultural change that DOD continues to struggle with as it strives to achieve the level of ‘jointness’ envisioned under Goldwater-Nichols.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, such change will undoubtedly require legislative mandate and will span greatly diverse cultures entrenched across the government, like in the Departments of State, Treasury, Commerce, and Trade; just to name a few. Lastly, it is recognized that change on this scale requires long-term strategic vision, increased resources, and cumulative incremental measures focused on the ‘next generation’ of USG employees requiring decades.

Cultural change initiatives are complex, long term programs worthy of study beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to at least acknowledge the increasingly persistent calls for cultural change throughout proponents of reform and briefly highlight recurring proposals:

1. Training and Education: Nearly all proponents for interagency reform recommend more complete and comprehensive interagency training at the

initial, mid and senior levels throughout a USG employee's career.<sup>38</sup> Such training includes but is not limited to the development of government-wide training institutions, and cross fertilization of skills through interagency exchanges and liaison assignments similar to but broader in scope to the current Joint Interagency Task Forces and Coordination Groups (JIACG).

2. Personnel: In order to increase interagency deployability and create a cadre of USG experts' required to meet surge requirements and afford them opportunities for professional development, USG agencies and departments must either grow or restructure themselves.<sup>39</sup> This argument is echoed in the CSIS Smart Power document that emphasizes the need to "resource a 'float' for civilian agencies"<sup>40</sup> and is often referred to as 'building a bench' within agencies similar to that of DOD. While congressional support for such manpower and budget growth has not been forthcoming (as evidenced by the denial of State Department requests for increased manning), studies by CSIS and other organizations may receive significant attention and traction following the upcoming Presidential election. Regardless, recent statements by the Secretary of Defense, President Bush's appeal to Congress during his State of the Union Address and the undeniable need for increased non-DOD governmental capability continue to press the issue and will eventually gain support.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the use of technologies available to connect 'the field' to agency subject matter experts (SMEs) through email, video teleconferencing, online collaboration, and threaded discussions is an untapped resource that should be further explored.

3. Planning Capability: An overarching argument among virtually all reform proponents is that strategic and operational planning capability and capacity must be enhanced throughout the USG. Such recommendations broadly include the development of comprehensive USG strategic and operational planning procedures, roles and requirements, and increasing interagency representation and participation in planning groups.
4. Budget: Changes on this scale will require increased budgetary commitment by Congress that it has been so reluctant to provide over the past five to ten years. Cursory examples of this include the DOS's continuing effort to receive funding necessary to staff the S/CRS, develop the afore mentioned deployable cadre and attain a 'bench' of offices in order to increase support to new COCOMs such as Africa Command (AFRICOM). The importance of this cannot be understated and in an unprecedented move, Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Gates recently made public statements calling for increased funding for other USG agencies and departments.<sup>42</sup> While Gates did not go so far as to volunteer a portion of the DOD budget to meet these requirements, the argument does form the foundation for allocating resources across USG agencies based on a policy lead established by the NSS and by existing or eventual soft power expertise.

### Strategic Leadership

In conducting research on the topic of interagency reform, a slight majority of the texts, reports and statements tended to favor a less aggressive incremental approach than outlined above. Reasons most commonly cited for pursuing this path include the

challenges posed by “the demands and pressures of America’s domestic politics and constituencies and how these pressures will complicate the development of a sophisticated foreign policy and the investment in tools required to carry it out.”<sup>43</sup> Other more compelling arguments center on lower success rates of large scale organizational change when compared to smaller, incremental, and less drastic change initiatives. Finally, one recurring argument sets forth a ‘do no harm mantra’, emphasizing change without placing too much strain on the political system and to some degree, protect the current institution.<sup>44</sup>

As one would expect, there are equally compelling arguments that support large scale USG organizational change. Such arguments generally accept the premise that the current structure is not capable of responding to the dynamic, fast paced and complex environment created by the effect and influence of non-state actors, multi-national corporations, and globalization. Still others posit, as does this author, that the current core structure is the actual cause of recent policy failures and lackluster interagency reform efforts, and that real organizational change is the only suitable option. However, regardless of where one falls along the continuum of options, one enabler is vital to any USG interagency reform initiative; strategic leadership.

As evidenced throughout this paper, the vast majority of intellectual activity put forward towards studying interagency reform and developing possible solutions is occurring outside the USG. While extremely valuable and largely effective in generating dialogue, the process is no more than intellectual and academic jousting unless the process gains traction within the executive and legislative branches. What is needed is a political catalyst to spark a process resembling the National Security Act of 1947 and

while Goldwater-Nichols can serve as an initial framework, it is far too narrow to adequately address a government-wide solution.<sup>45</sup> Some may argue that CSIS's recent Commission of Smart Power is that catalyst and while CSIS "serves as a strategic planning partner for the government by conducting research and analysis, and developing policy initiatives that look into the future and anticipate change,"<sup>46</sup> is this truly a USG government initiative with legislative sponsors willing to commit the necessary political capital to see it through? I argue that it is not and while it attempts to address interagency reform from a government-wide perspective and is the result of an impressive brain trust, it resembles more of a consensus building document vice a true analysis of structural and functional deficiencies. In the truest sense, these reports remain as a recommendation to the next administration and Congress, as well as a potential framework for discussion by presidential candidates throughout 2008. At best, they will resonate with influential members of Congress, presidential candidates, or new administrations who pick up the torch and carry it forward. Conversely, the worst case scenario is that election politics and domestic political risk overshadows the complexity and urgency of the task and interagency reform continues to be relegated to ad-hoc, reactive, iterative initiatives.

Can the above scenario be averted? Yes, but only through the urging of both executive and legislative branches, and the emergence of bi-partisan leadership within Congress willing to commit long term political will.<sup>47</sup> Once in place, these leaders can create House and Senate hearings on National Security Reform resembling those that occurred in the mid-1940's and early 1980s in order to pull the dialogue out of the think

tanks and into the government while simultaneously creating communities of interest so critical to such far reaching initiatives.<sup>48</sup>

### Interagency Transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The current interagency apparatus is incapable of responding to the 21st Century global security environment in which the United States must operate and it must be reformed. Central to this reform is an acceptance that the current and future global security steady state is one of constant change and complexity; not predictability highlighted by contingencies or crisis. Only when this premise is accepted can the Cold War structure of the USG be transformed into a dynamic organization that is strengthened through interagency cooperation and unity of effort.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Gates, *Landon Lecture (Kansas State University)* 26 November 2007; available from <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>2</sup> George W. Bush, *Organization of the National Security Council System: National Security Presidential Directive 1* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 13 February 2001), available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-1.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Alan G. Whittaker, Fredrick C. Smith & Elizabeth McKune, *The National Security Policy Process: The National Security Council and Interagency System, Research Report, Annual Update* (Washington, D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense University, April 2007), 10-16.

<sup>4</sup> William J. Clinton, *PDD/NSC 56: Managing Complex Contingency Operations* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, May 1997), available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd56.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Donley, *Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-01* (McLean, VA: Hicks and Associates, Inc., March 2005), available from <http://www.hicksandassociates.com/reports/HAI-occasional-paper.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 5.

<sup>7</sup> The Federation of American Scientists Intelligence Resource Program, "George W. Bush Administration National Security Presidential Directives [NSPD]" available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/index.html>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>8</sup> George W. Bush, *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-44: Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 7 December 2005), available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 102-103.

<sup>11</sup> Clark A. Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: U.S. Government and Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era Phase 2 Report* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 2005), available from [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/bgn\\_ph2\\_report.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/bgn_ph2_report.pdf); Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Strategy." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Houghton Mifflin Company, 02 Jan. 2008), available from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/strategy>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Salvaging American Defense: The Challenge of Strategic Overstretch* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2007), 361.

<sup>15</sup> LTC Nathan Freier, interview by author, Carlisle Barracks, PA., 2 January 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Don M. Snider and John A. Nagl, *The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision* (Carlisle, PA.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2001) available from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/strategy/10snider.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 140.

<sup>17</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-01, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Murdock et al., 28-29.

<sup>19</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-01, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cordesman, 362.

<sup>21</sup> Geoff Davis, *Interagency Reform Study Act of 2007: H.R. 2143 IH* (Washington, D.C., 3 May 2007) available from <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.R.2143;> Internet; accessed 26 February 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-01, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Murdock et al., 29.

<sup>24</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-01, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Donley, *Rethinking the Interagency System: Occasional Paper # 05-02* (McLean, VA: Hicks and Associates, Inc., May 2005), available from <http://www.hicksandassociates.com/reports/HAI-occasional-paper-2.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Roman, "Can Goldwater-Nichols Reforms for the Interagency Succeed?" 19 April 2007; available from <http://www.stimson.org/pub.cfm?id=431>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Murdock et al., 20.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>32</sup> Richard L. Armitage and Joseph S. Nye, *CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smart, More Secure America* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2007), available from [http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071106\\_csissmartpowerreport.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071106_csissmartpowerreport.pdf); Internet; accessed 18 February 2008, 66.

<sup>33</sup> Roman, 2.

<sup>34</sup> Murdock et al., 21.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>36</sup> Armitage and Nye, 64.

<sup>37</sup> Murdock et al., 7.

<sup>38</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System Part 2: Occasional Paper # 05-02, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Gates, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Armitage and Nye, 67.

<sup>41</sup> Gates, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Armitage and Nye, 65.

<sup>44</sup> Murdock et al., 25.

<sup>45</sup> Donley, Occasional Rethinking the Interagency System Part 2: Occasional Paper # 05-02, 14.



<sup>46</sup> *The Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Home Page*, available from <http://www.csis.org/about/>; Internet; accessed 18 February 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Gates, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Donley, Rethinking the Interagency System Part 2: Occasional Paper # 05-02, 13.